

Message Text

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PAGE 01 WELLIN 03113 150537Z
ACTION EA-12

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-----066673 152248Z /61
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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO AMEMBASSY SUVA
SECSTATE WASHDC 5737

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E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: PFOR, AFSP, OTRA, WS, NZ
SUBJECT: REQUESTED TRAVEL OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

REF: SUVA 987

1. THE REFERENCED CABLE, ADDRESSED TO WELLINGTON FOR INFORMATION, ANNOUNCED THE TRAVEL ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS OF AN OFFICER ASSIGNED TO AMEMBASSY SUVA TO WESTERN SAMOA, A COUNTRY TO WHICH AMBASSADOR SELDEN IS ACCREDITED AND FOR WHICH EMBASSY WELLINGTON IS RESPONSIBLE.

2. ASIDE FROM THE QUESTION OF JURISDICTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES, THE PROPOSED TRAVEL RAISES DIFFICULTIES FOR US ON BROADER POLICY GROUNDS. AS BOTH DEPARTMENT AND AMEMBASSY SUVA ARE AWARE, WHEN NEWS OF OUR PLANS TO PLACE A RESIDENT AMBASSADOR IN FIJI FIRST BECAME KNOWN, THE GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN SAMOA TOLD US IN UNMISTAKEABLE TERMS THAT IT DID NOT WANT ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT TO BE CONDUCTED FROM SUVA. FOR THAT REASON (AND OTHERS), JURISDICTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR WESTERN SAMOA WAS LEFT WITH WELLINGTON. THE QUESTION OF REPRESENTATION FROM SUVA WAS AGAIN UNDERSCORED TO US BY THE WESTERN SAMOAN HIGH COMMISSION HERE DURING

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A RECENT VISIT BY THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICER-DESIGNATE. WHILE THE HIGH COMMISSION FELT MR. CRAIG WOULD BE WELCOME IN WESTERN SAMOA AS A REGIONAL OFFICER WHO JUST HAPPENED TO BE BASED IN SUVA, (WE TOOK PAINS TO EMPHASIZE THIS), WE WERE CAUTIONED ONCE MORE ON THE SAMOAN SENSITIVITY ON THIS ISSUE. NOW TO SEND AN OFFICER FROM EMBASSY SUVA TO UNDERTAKE A TASK SUCH AS A

WAGE SURVEY, WHICH WILL PUT HIM IN CONTACT WITH A NUMBER OF BUSINESSMEN AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, WILL AT BEST RAISE QUESTIONS IN THE SAMOANS' MINDS ABOUT OUR EARLIER ASSURANCES THAT ALL RELATIONS WOULD BE VIA WELLINGTON. AT WORST IT COULD PROVOKE, GIVEN THE SAMOAN TEMPER, AN UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP.

3. WE ALSO WISH TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE DISPATCH OF A STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICER TO UNDERTAKE A TASK OF THIS NATURE IS INDEED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE SUPPORT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND THE PEACE CORPS. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT UNDER THE CURRENT STATE-PEACE CORPS SHARED SUPPORT AGREEMENT, STATE IS RESPONSIBLE ONLY FOR PROVIDING BUDGET AND FISCAL SUPPORT TO PEACE CORPS IN APIA. WE WOULD SUGGEST WAGE SURVEY IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PEACE CORPS.

4. GIVEN THE ABOVE, WE REQUEST THAT THE TRAVEL OF MR. RUNCKEL BE CANCELLED. WE ALSO REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT'S ADVICE CONCERNING THE QUESTION RAISED IN PARAGRAPH 3 ABOVE.
HEALY

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